

Message Text

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SUBJECT: LETTER FROM SECRETARY-GENERAL WALDHEIM FOR SECSTATE

1. FOLLOWING LETTER HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM SECRETARY-GENERAL WALDHEIM FOR TRANSMITTAL TO SECRETARY KISSINGER. TEXT IS TRANSMITTED BELOW AND ORIGINAL OF LETTER WILL BE FORWARDED.

2. BEGIN TEXT

21 JULY 1976

DEAR HENRY,

IN CONTINUATION OF OUR CLOSE CONTACTS IN MATTERS PERTAINING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EGYPT/ISRAEL AGREEMENT OF SEPTEMBER 1975, I WOULD LIKE TO BRING TO YOUR ATTENTION A MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM RECENTLY BROUGHT UP BY THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT. THIS PROBLEM CONCERNS THE LEGAL STATUS OF BUFFER ZONE 1, WHICH ENCOMPASSES THE STRATEGIC GIDDI AND MITLA PASSES, THE SURVEILLANCE STATIONS OF THE TWO PARTIES, AND THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT'S WATCH STATIONS AND SENSOR FIELDS.

AS YOU WILL RECALL, THE NATURE OF THE BUFFER ZONE, UNDER THE AGREEMENT ON THE DISENGAGEMENT OF FORCES OF 18 JANUARY 1974, HAD NEVER BEEN CALLED INTO QUESTION. NOW, HOWEVER, CONFIDENTIAL

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THE GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT MAINTAINS THAT THE PRESENT BUFFER

ZONE 1 IS NOT A UNITED NATIONS AREA, NOR A CONDOMINIUM BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL. EGYPT AFFIRMS THAT THE AREA REMAINS UNDER FULL EGYPTIAN SOVEREIGNTY. WHILE EGYPT HAS VOLUNTARILY ACCEPTED CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS PERTAINING TO THE NON-MILITARY CHARACTER OF THE BUFFER ZONE, IT INSISTS ON ITS SOVEREIGN RIGHT TO UNDERTAKE CIVILIAN ACTIVITIES IN THE BUFFER ZONE. IN THIS CONNEXION, IT IS IMPORTANT TO BEAR IN MIND THAT THE AGREEMENT OF SEPTEMBER 1975 PROVIDES FOR A CLEARER SITUATION IN THE SOUTHERN AREA (SOUTH OF LINE E AND WEST OF LINE M). THERE EGYPT IS SPECIFICALLY PERMITTED TO CARRY OUT CERTAIN CIVILIAN ACTIVITIES RELATING TO THE OIL FIELDS IN ABU RODEIS AND RAS SUDAR, INCLUDING THE MAINTENANCE OF A LIMITED NUMBER OF CIVILIAN POLICE.

THE GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT HAS RAISED THIS FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION REGARDING BUFFER ZONE 1 IN CONNEXION WITH ITS INSISTENCE THAT IT BE PERMITTED TO PROVIDE NORMAL CIVILIAN SERVICES TO THE EGYPTIAN CITIZENS IN THE BUFFER ZONE (BEDOUINS). AS YOU ARE AWARE, THIS MATTER WAS FULLY DISCUSSED IN THE MILITARY WORKING GROUP THAT WAS CONVENED TO WORK OUT THE PROTOCOL FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT. AT THAT TIME EGYPT REFUSED TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEMS OF EGYPTIAN CIVILIANS WITH ISRAELI REPRESENTATIVES IN THE WORKING GROUP. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES ISRAEL REFUSED TO AGREE TO THE TERMS OF THE PROTOCOL UNLESS IT COULD RECEIVE SATISFACTION WITH RESPECT TO THE STATUS OF THE CIVILIANS IN BUFFER ZONE 1. THE MATTER WAS RESOLVED IN A WAY THAT LEFT OPEN THE QUESTION AS TO HOW EGYPT SHOULD PROVIDE SERVICES TO THE BEDOUINS. LATER, AT THE COMPLETION OF THE DISENGAGEMENT PROCESS, GENERAL SIILASVUO, IN HIS CAPACITY AS CHIEF CO-ORDINATOR OF THE UNITED NATIONS PEACE-KEEPING MISSIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST, WORKED OUT, IN CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH BOTH PARTIES, ARRANGEMENTS WHICH PERMITTED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EGYPTIAN ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRE TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO THE BEDOUINS. NOW EGYPT IS INSISTING THAT UNEF PERMIT THE INTRODUCTION OF UNIFORMED EGYPTIAN CIVILIAN POLICE INTO THE BUFFER ZONE.

EGYPT HAS ALSO FORMALLY REQUESTED THAT UNEF SHOULD ALLOW EGYPT TO EXPLOIT ITS NATURAL RESOURCES IN BUFFER ZONE 1. IN THIS CONNEXION, IT HAS INFORMED UNEF THAT IT INTENDS TO
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SEND AN INTERNATIONAL CIVILIAN TEAM TO EXPLORE FOR OIL IN THE BUFFER ZONE. IN DEALING WITH THE EGYPTIAN REQUEST, THE CHIEF CO-ORDINATOR AND THE FORCE COMMANDER OF UNEF HAVE, OF COURSE, CONSULTED WITH THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT. ISRAEL, IN OPPOSING ANY EGYPTIAN CIVILIAN ACTIVITIES IN THE BUFFER ZONE, MAINTAINS THAT EGYPT CANNOT ASSERT ITS SOVEREIGNTY IN THE BUFFER ZONE, WHICH IS UNDER A SPECIAL REGIME. CONSEQUENTLY, ISRAEL IS OPPOSED TO HAVING EGYPTIAN CIVILIAN POLICE IN

BUFFER ZONE 1, POINTING OUT THAT IT IS ONLY IN THE SOUTHERN AREA THAT THE AGREEMENT PROVIDES FOR THE PRESENCE OF EGYPTIAN CIVILIAN POLICE UNDER SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS. ISRAEL IS ALSO OPPOSED TO ALLOWING EGYPT TO UNDERTAKE OIL EXPLORATION IN THE BUFFER ZONE. UNDER THE UNDERSTANDING WORKED OUT WITH BOTH PARTIES, UNEF WILL HAVE TO GIVE ITS RESPONSE TO EGYPT SOME TIME DURING THE FIRST WEEK IN AUGUST 1976.

THE STATUS OF THE BUFFER ZONE IS, OF COURSE, A FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE AND ANY DISAGREEMENT ON THIS MATTER WOULD INEVITABLY CREATE THE MOST SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SEPTEMBER 1975 AGREEMENT. IT IS THEREFORE ESSENTIAL TO RESOLVE THIS MATTER WITHOUT DEALY.

SINCE YOU WERE INSTRUMENTAL IN DEVISING AND BRINGING ABOUT THAT AGREEMENT, YOUR VIEWS AND ANY INFORMATION HAVING A BEARING ON THIS MATTER THAT MIGHT BE CONTAINED IN THE RECORDS OF YOUR DISCUSSIONS WHICH LED TO THE CONCLUSION OF THE AGREEMENT WOULD BE MOST USEFUL FOR THE RESOLUTION OF THE PRESENT DIFFICULTIES. I WOULD BE MOST GRATEFUL FOR ANY ADVICE YOU MAY WISH TO GIVE ME ON THIS IMPORTANT MATTER.

WARM REGARDS,

YOURS SINCERELY,
KURT WALDHEIM
END TEXT
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